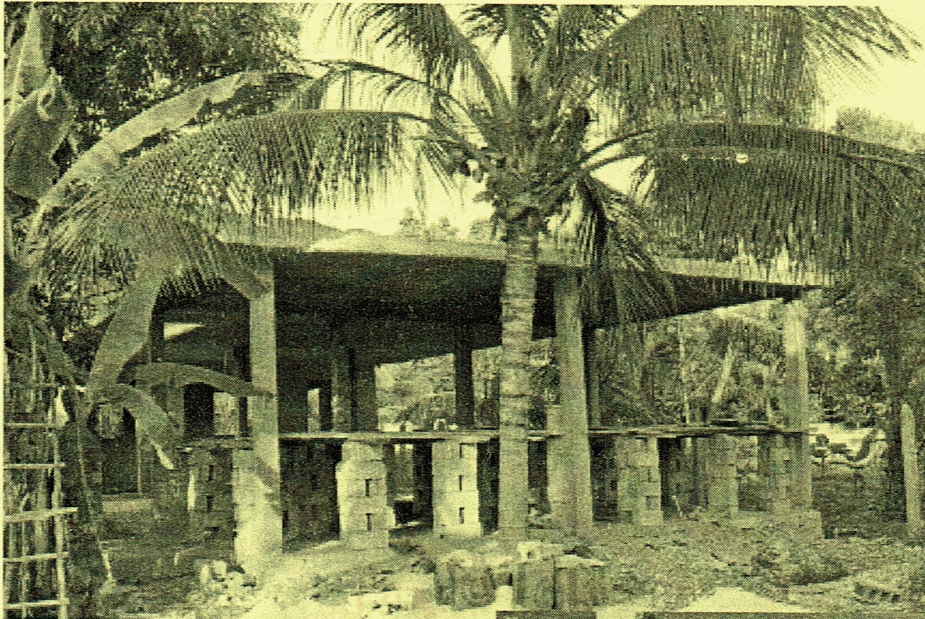


LIVING ORTHODOXY



SNEAK PREVIEW:

A NEW HOME FOR
THE CHURCH OF
ST. AUGUSTIN
CYVADIER, JACMEL, HAITI

AND...

**ST. EGWIN OF WORCESTER
MONASTICISM**

**IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
VIABLE ALTERNATIVE
OR FORGOTTEN IDEAL?
TROPARIA AND PRAYERS
FOR THE KATHISMATA
OF THE PSALTER
THE CURIOUS STORY
OF A COFFEE BEAN**



NATIVITY IN HAITI

**#150 - Vol. XXV #6
November-December 2005**

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is published with the blessing of
HIS GRACE, GABRIEL, Bishop of Manhattan
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

THE CURIOUS STORY OF A COFFEE BEAN,

or

WHAT WON'T WE DO

TO PUT MISSION BLEU IN YOUR POT?

The story of most beans of Mission Bleu is rather more prosaic than that of the last batch (which is almost exhausted). Seemed like a story sufficiently amusing to share...

Like all such beans, my story begins on a bush in the rugged high mountains which lie between Léogane and Jacmel. Picked when ripe to perfection, I joined my fellows in a sack carried on the picker's back (or, perhaps, if lucky, on a donkey's back). Arrived at Tombe Gateau, I lay in the sun long enough to reach the perfect state of drying before being husked, washed, fermented, dried again and separated from my less perfect fellows by one of the dozens of workers who collectively own the co-operative. More drying, to just the right point, and then into an enormous sack with other equally fortunate beans.

So far, my story is that of every other bean of Mission Bleu. Then the fun begins. Under normal conditions, I would simply have been picked up in a somewhat smaller sack, transported by car to Port-au-Prince to be packed into luggage and transported to Tennessee by air to be roasted and packaged.

But these were not ordinary conditions. Supplies of unroasted beans in Tennessee were exhausted, and the "usual route" was impossible, as our carrier had been unable to come to Haiti for several months. Thus, my rather extraordinary history.

A kindly visitor to the parish east of Jacmel, Cara Margaret, agreed to do what she could to obtain some more beans, so the pots of the lovers of Mission Bleu would not run dry. But she had no car... she flew to Jacmel and was to return to Port-

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THE HOLY HIERARCH EGWIN OF WORCESTER

WHOM THE HOLY CHURCH CELEBRATES ON THE 30TH OF DECEMBER

Our holy Father Egwin was born of royal stock in the region of Worcester. When he came of age, he left the world and embraced the monastic life, wherein he soon achieved a high standard of excellence. He was ordained through all the degrees of the priesthood, and in 693, on the repose of the bishop of Worcester, he was elected to the episcopal see of Worcester by all the clergy and the people, and with the assent of King Ethelred of Mercia and the archbishop of Canterbury. In this exalted position he showed himself to be a pattern of all virtue: a father of orphans, a protector of widows, a righteous judge of the oppressed and comforter of the afflicted. By his powerful preaching many were converted from paganism or from an evil way of life.

The righteous, however, must expect tribulation in this world, and malicious tongues began to wag against the saint. He decided to travel to Rome and put his case before the highest tribunal in the West. But before leaving, and although he was innocent of the charges brought against him, he imposed a severe penance upon himself both for his own sins and for the sins of the people. He locked his feet in iron fetters and threw the key into the river Avon. Thus bound, he set off on the arduous journey to Rome.

As he and his companions were passing through an arid region of the Alps, they began to thirst. Those among his companions who did not acknowledge the bishop's sanctity asked him mockingly to pray for water as Moses once did in the desert. But others, who did believe in him, rebuked the unbelievers and asked him in a different tone, with true faith and love. The saint prostrated himself in prayer to the Lord with his companions. On arising, they saw a pure stream of water gush forth out of the rock; whereupon everybody, believers and unbelievers alike, gave heartfelt thanks to God Who is wondrous in His saints.

When they arrived in Rome and had prayed in the church of St. Peter, the saint told his

companions to go down to the river Tiber and see if they could catch a fish. They did as he said, and to their delight caught a medium-sized salmon which they brought to the holy father. When he saw it he gave thanks and ordered them to slit it open. Great was their astonishment when they found inside the fish the key which the saint had cast into the river Avon! News of the miracle spread throughout Rome, and from all sides the faithful came to seek the holy man's blessing.

Pope Constantine, who had heard of Egwin's arrival, the great labors of his journey and the miracle of the key, did not allow the saint to prostrate before him, but himself asked his blessing. And for the rest of his stay in Rome he treated him with great respect, celebrating the Divine Liturgy with him and having many private talks with him. The case against the saint was examined and annulled, and he returned to England laden with honors. The people greeted him with joy, and by the decree of the archbishop he was restored to the see from which he had been dismissed. King Ethelred, too, received him with love, ready to fulfill whatever the saint might ask for.

One of the saint's first requests was to be granted the pasture land beside the Avon where he had thrown the key into the river. One of the king's shepherds had once had a vision at this same spot, in which a Virgin of extraordinary splendor appeared holding a book in her hands and chanting psalms in the company of two other virgins. When the shepherd told this to the saint, he turned it over in his mind for a long time, praying to God with vigils and fasting. Then, early one morning, after the saint and three companions had spent the whole night in prayer, they set out barefoot to the spot, chanting psalms and hymns. Parting company with the others, St. Egwin fell to the earth with tears and groans. On arising from his prayer, he saw three virgins, of whom the middle one was most wondrous to behold, shining in light and surrounded by an ineffable fragrance. In her hands she held a book, and

a cross which shone with a golden radiance. When Egwin realized that this was the Most Holy Mother of God, she, as if approving his thought, blessed him with the cross and disappeared.

This vision gave the saint to understand that it was God's will that this place, later called Evesham, should be dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary. He determined to build a church there in accordance with a vow he had made during a period of especially fierce temptation. So he bought the land and carried out the task to completion, endowing the foundation with many gifts from the English kings. At his request, the pope granted his foundation stavropegial status, which was confirmed by a council of the English Church held at Alcester in 709.

In 711 the saint retired from his see and devoted himself exclusively to the government of his monastery at Evesham. With fastings and vigils, with tears and groans, he poured out his prayers to the Lord, and was accounted worthy of many visitations of the angels and the saints. He was particularly devoted to the Mother of God, whose praises were always on his lips.

Already rich in years and Divine Grace, he fell ill in the monastery which he had founded, and, feeling the approach of death, he called together the brethren and said: "Most reverend and beloved sons, I beseech you, be zealous in observing the commandments of God, and keep the vow which you made to Him. For it is written: 'Make your vows and pay them to the Lord.' And as the Apostle says: 'Follow peace and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.'" Then, having commended them to the Father and having partaken of the Body and Blood of the Lord, he departed this life on December 30, 717. Great was the sorrow of the brethren and all the people.

But during the burial of the saint, sorrow at his departure was mixed with joy at his triumph. And after his burial many miracles proved that St. Egwin had obtained great favor with the Lord. On praying to him, the blind were given their sight, the deaf their hearing, the sick in body and soul were healed. And so his fame spread throughout the country, and many came to his tomb to seek his intercession.

Once a penitent, grieving over a serious crime he had committed, bound himself with a number of iron fetters. He vowed that he would not loose himself from them until God had shown him that he was loosed from the fetters of his sins. He dragged himself to several shrines of the saints, and after diligent prayer and fasting all but one of the fetters broke.

However, the ninth fetter was fastened more tightly than the others, so that the flesh around it began to swell. In hope of being released from this one, too, the unfortunate man travelled to Rome, to the tombs of the holy Apostles. There, after heartfelt prayer, he was told in his sleep: "Go to England and seek the place of the blessed Bishop Egwin, and when you have given him due veneration, you will obtain mercy." Joyfully, the penitent set off on his journey and, arriving at the Church of St. Egwin, spent several days there in prayer and fasting. One day, after the brethren had chanted the third hour and celebrated the Divine Liturgy, the ninth fetter snapped with such force that all the brethren heard it, and the penitent himself was thrown some distance as if by the hand of a man. When the brethren ascertained the truth of the miracle, they rejoiced and gave glory to God.

On the death of King Harold in 1040, the abbot of Evesham, Bishop Alfwald of London, took part in an embassy to bring Canute's other son, Hardicanute, to the English throne. As they were crossing the Channel to Flanders, a fierce tempest arose such that even the sailors were close to despair. Bishop Alfwald turned in prayer to St. Egwin, begging him to free them from their peril, and promising that if God showed them mercy through his prayers, he would make a new reliquary for the saint and cause his feast day to be celebrated with even greater honor. No sooner had he made this petition than the sea suddenly became calm, and they shortly reached their port of destination. The bishop was true to his word. A splendid reliquary of gold and silver was prepared, and the translation of St. Egwin's relics took place on September 10.

A few years later, a craftsman named Godric was working on this shrine, carving little figures

onto it with his scalpel. Suddenly the scalpel he was holding in his right hand went straight through his left, causing blood to flow on the other side. In his distress Godric cried: "O Saint Egwin, am I not here in your service? If you have any care for the service of a wretched sinner, display it now!" No sooner had he spoken these words than the wound was miraculously healed with no pain or trace of blood.

There was a woman by the name of Alghitha who during the reign of King Edward used to frequent the Church of St. Egwin and who, for love of the saint, wished to acquire a part of his relics. So she bribed some boys to steal it secretly. Coming by night, they opened the reliquary and stole a part of the arm of the saint and one of his teeth. Then they brought the relics to the woman, who joyfully stored them away among her own things. That night St. Egwin appeared to her in a vision and told her to return the relics, saying that they had been unjustly taken away. She ignored his command, whereupon he appeared to her a second time. But when she in her greed persuaded herself that these visions were demonic phantoms, St. Egwin appeared to her a third time and sternly ordered her to return the relics. When she refused he replied: "Before the sun rises, you will regret your obstinacy in disobeying my commands." The woman rose from her bed blind, and so she remained for the rest of her life. However, she went to Abbot Manny and asked him to let her have the relics, promising that she would make a reliquary of gold and silver in their honor. She also promised that after her death St. Egwin and his servants would receive some of her land. So much for the woman. As for the boys, God punished them severely. One drowned in water, while another was afflicted with a painful illness for the rest of his life.

Near Canterbury there lived a man who had been dumb from his mother's womb. While still young, he decided to go to Rome to venerate the tombs of the holy apostles. On arriving, he prayed for three years for the healing of his infirmity. But having received no cure, he was sorrowfully contemplating the possibility of never being healed when a man in shining white vestments appeared to

him in the night and said: "Why have you been lying here for so long to no avail? Go back to your native land of England, look for the Monastery of St. Egwin, go there with an offering, and when you have prayed to God and that saint you will be immediately healed." The man obeyed this command and with God's help arrived at St. Egwin's monastery. It was a Saturday, and all the brethren were standing in the choir during Vespers when the man came up to the altar with a candle in his hand. After praying for a long time he offered the candle, and then again stood in prayer. Suddenly blood began to flow from his mouth and onto the pavement. When the Vespers prayers were over, Prior Avicius and some of the senior brethren came up and asked him what the matter was and why he was lying there coughing up blood. So the man stood up in the midst of the brethren, and, stretching out his hands and lifting up his eyes to God, he said: "Thus have I been helped by Almighty God and my lord St. Egwin, though whose prayers Christ has worked a miracle in me the wretched one, as I shall now tell you truly." Then he told them the whole story from the beginning. When he had finished, the brethren rejoiced, and, bringing together the people, they all sang the *Te Deum*.

There was a man who had been ill for a long time with a horribly swollen and tumorous foot and leg, so that he had to be supported by crutches on both sides. One day he came to the relics of St. Egwin and prayed fervently to God and the saint. The brethren were at that time in the choir, and one could see the fearful hope on their faces as they prayed for the poor man's recovery. Suddenly the intent silence was broken by the sound of the sick man throwing away his crutches, falling to the ground and then joyfully jumping up again, completely healed. Amidst general rejoicing he left his crutches by the holy altar and returned home praising God.

A leper whose whole body was disfigured by the disease sought St. Egwin's intercession. His prayer was answered, and you could see the scab come clean off his body like a shield. Many others were healed through St. Egwin: the blind, the deaf, the mute, the lepers, the paralytics; and many who were bound

with fetters saw them struck off and bounding a long distance away, filling the whole church with clatter.

Once a monk of Coventry named Sperckulf, a man of very ascetic life (he sometimes fasted for four or six days continuously), came as was his custom to the feast of St. Egwin, and was spending the night in hymns and prayers in the crypt dedicated to the saint. While he was chanting the psalms of David, he saw the doors of the crypt open and an unearthly light descend into it, chasing away all shadows. Then an extraordinarily beautiful procession of saints met his fearful gaze. First came some boys carrying candles, then deacons, then some older men with shining white hair. These were all dressed in white vestments. At the rear came a person dressed in indescribably beautiful pontifical vestments whom two of the older men were escorting, one on either side. Going up to the altar of St. Egwin, they chanted Matins with great reverence, followed by the Divine Liturgy, which was celebrated in the normal manner with wonderful grace. Then came the canonical Hours. Finally, the whole company processed out of the church in

the same order in which they had entered.

Another night, the same monk was keeping vigil in the church of the Mother of God. Suddenly all the doors of the church opened of their own accord and he saw with extraordinary clarity a procession entering in the same manner as before, but with St. Egwin this time escorting the Holy Virgin. Coming up to the altar dedicated to her, St. Egwin proceeded to celebrate Matins and the Divine Liturgy most beautifully. Sperckulf, who was watching with great trepidation, was also amazed to see some monks of Evesham whom he had known and who had reposed some time before. Going up to one of them, he asked him who it was for whom the Liturgy was being celebrated. "Be quiet," he replied: "Don't you know that our lord St. Egwin is celebrating the sacred mystery to the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary?" Terrified by this reply, Sperckulf returned to his place and waited to see what would happen. At the end of the Liturgy and the service to the Mother of God, two bishops escorted her, one on either side, while the procession went out as it had come in, in great glory.

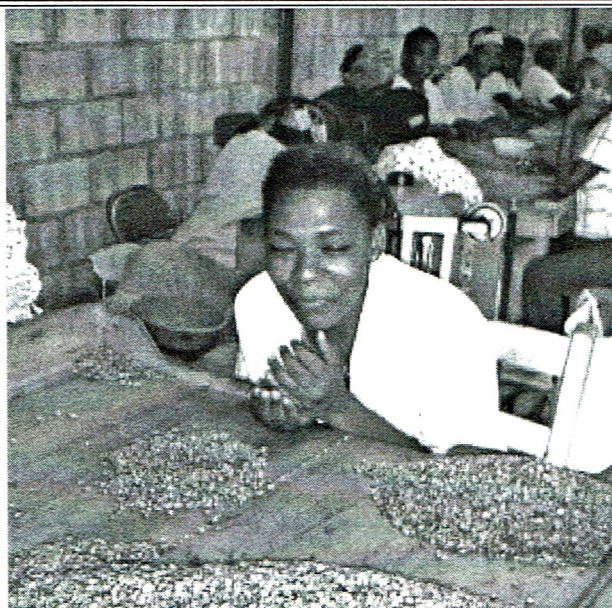
Holy Father Egwin, pray to God for us!

Compiled by Vladimir Moss from: Vladimir Moss, "Saint Egwin of Worcester", *Orthodox America*, December, 1985; W.D. Macray, *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham*, Rolls series, 1863, pp. 36-38, 44-53; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*; David Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978

(continued from page 2)

au-Prince the same way. Braving our flaky telephone systems, she actually succeeded in contacting the "boss" — the manager of our little cooperative, Jean-Baptiste. Shortly before our visitor was to return to Port-au-Prince, Jean-Baptiste loaded a sackful of us on the back of his motorcycle, took off down the mountain and along the coast, to put us in her hands. Soon, we were airborne over the mountains (in a tiny propeller plane), making the journey which requires four hours by car in about fifteen minutes.

The adventure didn't end there: Cara Margaret doesn't live in Tennessee, so some more "extraordinary transport" was called for. On her arrival at the Atlanta airport, she was met by



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MONASTICISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE OR A FORGOTTEN IDEAL?

by Mother Ephrosynia of the Convent of Lesna, France

A brother went to see Abba Joseph and said to him, “Abba, as far as I can I say my prayer rule, I fast a little, I pray and meditate, I live in peace as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do?” Then the old man stood up and stretched his hands towards heaven. His fingers became like ten lamps of fire and he said to him, “If you will, you can become all flame.”

This is what monasticism is: a longing for God that knows no limits. It is the beginning of the Age to come, of the Kingdom of Heaven still here on earth. The Church calls monasticism the Angelic Life. According to Holy Tradition, in the fourth century an angel appeared to St. Pachomius, the first of the monks struggling out in the Egyptian desert to establish a monastic community, and gave him a bronze tablet, inscribed with a Rule for his monks to follow. From apostolic times to the present day thousands, hundreds of thousands, probably millions of people have left everything they had and scorned everything that this world has to offer in order to follow Christ and to live the Gospels more fully.

At times this impulse has been stronger, at times weaker, and the holy fathers speak of monasticism as a barometer of spiritual life in the Church. When monastic life flourishes, the faithful are really striving spiritually, and conversely, when few people find inspiration in the monastic ideal, monasteries diminish and are ignored, spiritual life amongst the faithful is on the decline. At the end of the fourth century, when persecution of Christians ceased and the Church knew peace for the first time, but the zeal of converts hadn’t cooled, and many Christians desired to give everything to Christ, monasticism even became a mass movement. One of the travel writers of the period, St. Palladius, tells of his visit to Oxyrhynchus, one of the cities of the Thebaid (in Egypt). “It is impossible to do justice to the marvels which we saw there. For the city is so full of monasteries that the very walls resound with the voices of monks. Other monasteries encircle it outside.... The temples and

capitols of the city were bursting with monks; every quarter of the city was inhabited by them.... The monks were almost in the majority over the secular inhabitants... and there is no hour of day or night when they do not offer acts of worship to God.... What can one say of the piety of the... people, who, when they saw us strangers, approached us as if we were angels? How can one convey an adequate idea of the throngs of monks and nuns past counting? However, as far as we could ascertain from the holy bishop of that place, we would say that he had under his jurisdiction 10,000 monks and 20,000 nuns. It is beyond my power to describe their hospitality and their love for us. In fact each of us had our cloaks torn apart by people pulling us to make us go and stay with them.” Closer to our own time, in Russia in 1907, towards the end of the spiritual revival of the 19th century and before the Revolution, there were 24,000 monks and 66,000 nuns, about 90,000 monastics, living in 970 monasteries. On the bleak side, the countryside of France, where my monastery is located, is peppered by empty monasteries in ruins, remnants of the Age of Faith, as historians call the Middle Ages. They are testimonies to the spiritual barrenness of France, where more people believe in astrology than in Christ, and people spit at me on the streets because they think I’m a Moslem. It would never occur to them that a woman wearing black might be a nun. The scene at the airport here in Ottawa when I arrived was nothing like the scene in Oxyrhynchus when St. Palladius walked through the gates, and you could probably travel clear across Canada or America and not see a single monastery nor meet a single monk or nun.

But is monasticism a completely lost cause today? True, to modern eyes, the monk is increasingly a figure of yesterday, someone silly and eccentric. People think of roly-poly Friar Tuck from Robin Hood or of the sinister, murderous monks in the novel *The Name of the Rose*. The word “nun” brings to mind Mother Theresa, or silly movies about nice but rather dumb women wearing

strange, uncomfortable clothes. Even in someone with a more Orthodox frame of mind, the word “monastic” applied to our times calls up the image of St. John of Shanghai, of Fr. Seraphim Rose, or the New Martyr the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and we wonder what can these saints possibly have in common with us? Is anything from their lives and experiences at all relevant or applicable, and how can we, Orthodox Christians of the 21st century, even dare to aspire to imitate them? The sayings of the desert fathers and the lives of the founders of monasticism abound with dire warnings that monasticism, especially the strict asceticism of past centuries, will be just about impossible in the latter days. Once, when the holy fathers were making predictions about the last generation, they said, “What have we ourselves done?” One of them, the great Abba Ischyriion replied, “We ourselves have fulfilled the commandments of God.” The others replied, “And those who come after us, what will they do?” He said, “They will struggle to achieve half our works.” They said, “And to those that come after them, what will happen?” He said, “The men of that generation will not accomplish any works at all and temptation will come upon them; and those who will persevere in that day will be greater than either us or our fathers.” Reading St. Ignaty Brianchaninov’s instructions for contemporary monastics, first published a little over a century ago and known in English as *The Arena* can be downright depressing. “We are extremely weak,” he says, “while the temptations that surround us have increased enormously.... Spiritual activity is quite unknown to us. We are completely engrossed in bodily activity and that with the purpose of appearing pious and holy in the eyes of the world and to get its reward. We have abandoned the hard and narrow way of salvation... we monks are diminished more than any nation, and we are humbled in all the earth today for our sins....” At the end of the *Arena*, St. Ignaty uses the image of beggars eating the scraps left over from a sumptuous banquet to describe the monks of the latter days, where the Lord says to them, “Brothers, in making my arrangements for the banquet, I did not have you in view. So I have not given you a proper dinner, and I am not giving you the gifts which have all been

given away according to a previously made calculation which only I can understand.” If someone today so much as even dares think of monasticism everything around him, both worldly and Orthodox, of the Church, seems to say, “Forget it! Don’t even try! It’s absolutely useless!”

In spite of the hardships and the off-putting advice of even the most authoritative Orthodox sources, many people still do choose to leave everything and everyone behind, to take up the cross of monastic struggles and to follow our Savior. I don’t think that it’s too optimistic to speak of a sort of revival of monasticism in our times. In the twenty years that I’ve been struggling to be a monastic, my monastery has doubled in size. Every week we get letters and phone-calls from women and girls who want to come, to enter or to learn more about our life. They are clearly searching for a deeper, more intense spiritual life and some form of dedication. Our monasteries in the Holy Land are growing and flourishing. Since the years of *perestroika* in Russia, hundreds, if not thousands, of monasteries have been opened. When I travel there, on the street every few feet of the way someone comes up to ask where I’m from, what monastery, for prayers, for a word of advice or consolation. They weep at the very sight of a nun and press lists of names into my hands, and their last kopecks and rubles. A very serious writer noted in surprise that in Russia more tourists visit monasteries than exhibits, museums or zoos.

What is it that continues to draw people to this way of life which is essentially a mystery, something that even the holiest monks speak of with awe and trembling? Above all, monasticism is the way of repentance. Not of the sort of repentance when we stop to sigh and feel sorry about the bad things we’ve done and then quickly move on to the next item on our list of things to do, or mumble a list of sins at confession so that we can go to Communion, but the sort that means a complete turn-about, a conversion, a profound change of lifestyle. This is the repentance of the Prodigal Son of the Gospels, who comes to realize that his entire way of life has been very wrong, and who leaves it all behind to go home to his father to ask forgiveness. The service of monastic tonsure begins with a sticheron

paraphrasing this parable: "Make haste to open unto me Thy fatherly embrace, for as the Prodigal I have wasted my life. In the unfailing wealth of Thy mercy, O Savior, reject not my heart in its poverty. For with compunction I cry to Thee, O Lord: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee." It is this longing for our Heavenly Father's embrace, for His forgiveness, and for a home with Him that still makes people turn their backs on everything and trudge along this rocky road.

The first step along this road is renunciation of the world, leaving it behind. This does not mean simply quitting school or your job, closing your bank account, moving to a monastery, putting on black and saying your prayers. According to the holy fathers the term "world" means the sum total of all our passions, attachments, opinions, petty likes and dislikes; everything that distances us from God and prevents us from discerning His Will. "No one can draw nigh to God save the man who has separated himself from the world. But I call separation not the departure of the body, but departure from the world's affairs," says St. Isaac the Syrian, one of the greatest monastic fathers of all time. "...No one who has communion with the world can have communion with God, and no one who has concern for the world can have concern for God," he continues. "If you truly love God," begins St. John of the Ladder, another monastic guide, "and long to reach the Kingdom that is to come, if you are pained by your failings and are mindful of punishment and of the eternal judgment, if you are truly afraid to die, then it will not be possible to have an attachment, or anxiety, or concern for money, possessions, for family relationships, for worldly glory, for love and brotherhood, indeed, for anything of earth.... Stripped of all thought of these, caring nothing about them, one will turn freely to Christ...."

At this point the most common question is "How do I know?" How do I know that I'm called to the particular form of renunciation of the world that monasticism represents? All of us have to leave the world in the sense of struggling to overcome our passions in one way or another; there's no question about that. But how can a person be sure that the Lord means for him to do it by embracing the

monastic life? How can we discern the will of God in this case? It's very true that there's no specific "monastic type" or particular character trait that defines someone as a candidate. My monastery has all sorts of people: fat, thin, old, young, outgoing, very shy, well-educated, high-school drop-outs, of the sweetest disposition, and some can be downright nasty at times. They did all sorts of things: one was a magazine editor, another a seamstress, someone was a semi-professional ball player, another sister has a PhD in philosophy; one of the youngest sisters came to us practically off the streets. Some of them had happy childhoods, others hated their parents; some of them were extremely successful at what they did, others hated their jobs. But all of them at some point in time became convinced of the necessity of dropping everything and starting along the road home to their Heavenly Father.

People often talk of vocations and callings, assuming that there has to be some sort of mystical experience to convince you to become a monastic. It's true that a lot of monastics can look back to a particular event that was the turning point in their lives. Nine times out of ten there's nothing really otherworldly about it. If you hear voices or see angels, probably the last place where you belong is a monastery! One of our sisters made her decision during an akathist before a miracle-working Icon of the Mother of God. All of her friends had gone dancing that night, but she chose to attend this akathist, and in the middle of it, it dawned on her that she was having a really good time; much better than she would have had dancing, and that it would make sense to do this full-time, as it were. Another sister was moved by the example of two nuns she met at the Synod Cathedral in New York. They were there to collect money for the Holy Land. Someone from the parish attacked them for no reason, accusing them of taking food from the kitchen without permission. Most of us would have tried to reason and explain the mistake, but one of the nuns, in a beautiful example of monastic humility, simply made a prostration and begged forgiveness. The fact that there really are still people today who try to do what the Gospels teach was a real revelation, and within a year this girl was a novice. Someone else was moved by a passage

from St. John Cassian. One of our older nuns made her decision when her parish priest asked her if she knew anyone who might consider being a nun. This was soon after World War II, and this person had assumed that there were no longer any monasteries left, that monasticism wasn't even a possibility. And when the priest asked, everything fell into place for her.

Even if there is such a moment, the choice and the decision to follow a monastic path is almost always a period of real struggle, of doubts, fears and temptations. A lot of the monastics I know, when the thought first came to them, wanted nothing to do with it and were quite shocked by the idea. The holy fathers emphasize that there is nothing that the evil one hates as much as monasticism and he will do everything possible to turn someone away from this path. If one is at all spiritually alert, you can practically see and hear him at work at this point. I've known people to get incredible job offers, receive huge amounts of money, marriage proposals from tall, dark, handsome and rich men. An older nun I knew had her husband, missing for twenty years, turn up on her doorstep the day before she left. Another one had her son threaten to shoot himself, someone else's mother starved herself for six weeks. If you speak to monastics you truly will find that fact is stranger than fiction! In spite of the trials, there's a growing conviction that there is nothing else that you can do, that no matter what, the monastic life is the only viable alternative. And this nags at you until there's just no other way out.

Once a monk escapes from the world, he begins to try to finally think clearly and to concentrate on the things that will determine his eternal fate. He begins to really understand and to feel that we, wretched sinners, really are perishing, that we desperately need a Redeemer and Someone to heal our souls, and that in Him alone is life, that everything besides is empty and senseless. He begins to really feel and experience this, not just to say the words. Only when a person stops listening to the noise and clatter of the world, turns his eyes away from its wild, psychedelic colors, and when he gets over the hangover that the world leaves you with, does he begin to see himself clearly and to discern the

meaning and aim of life on this earth and to struggle against his enemy, the evil one. St. John of the Ladder tells us, "All who enter upon the good fight, the monastic life, which is tough and painful, but also easy, must realize that they must leap into the fire, if they... expect the heavenly fire to dwell within them... let everyone test himself, and then eat the bread of the monastic life with its bitter herbs... and drink the cup of it with its tears...." Yes, it's true. The monastic life is not "fun." Most of us, especially those who had to go through a severe trial to leave the world, experience a "honeymoon" period, when you finally take the plunge, make the break with the world and get to a monastery. It's such a relief to have all that behind you, and to have finally started out on the way. Everything and everyone seems wonderful, you're full of zeal, and you can practically see the grace, it's so abundant. For some monastics this stage can go on for years. But sooner or later "reality" strikes and you see that everything that's been written about the hardships of monastic life is not just fancy words or symbolic phrases or allegory. It's not the physical side that's hard. With some effort and discipline anyone can learn to get up early and to stand through long church services, to make prostrations and to work, and work hard, at jobs that he doesn't necessarily like. A lot of people in the world have a much more difficult life in that sense. It's the encounter with yourself and who you really are and the struggle to change that, that is the slow but painful, day by day, minute by minute work of the monk. The work is done largely through our contacts and conflicts with other people. St. John of the Ladder is very blunt about this: "...Derided, mocked, jeered, you must accept the denial of your will. You must patiently endure opposition, suffer neglect without complaint, put up with violent arrogance. You must be ready for injustice, and not grieve when you are slandered; you must not be angered by contempt and you must show humility when you have been condemned." For most of us the most difficult element in all this is giving up your own will. In one of the most quoted monastic sayings, Abba Dorotheus, another great teacher of the monastic life says: "I know of no fall that happens to a monk that does not come from

trusting his own will and his own judgment.... Do you know someone who has fallen? Be sure that he directed himself... nothing is more grievous... nothing is more pernicious.”

When I was a young novice, I would get really annoyed at the writings of the holy fathers and the constant repetition that in the latter days monks will not be able to perform any podvigs, or great ascetic feats, but will work out their salvation through patience and long-suffering. “How boring!” I would think, “Surely if we set our minds and spirits to it, we can do it too? How come all we’re allowed is to sit around and be patient?” The secret here is that this is truly a great mercy of the Lord. Today we are not only unchristian in our approach to life, in our thoughts, words and actions, we are outright anti-Christian. Were the Lord to grant us the grace and give us the strength to perform even just one tenth of the ascetic feats of previous times, we would not only not profit, but the resulting pride and vainglory would lead us straight to perdition. This is especially true in monasticism, where, for the inexperienced, the intense work on one’s self is very easy to confuse with the self-analysis that so many self-help / ‘feel-good-about-yourself’ guides teach today.

Take, for example, the concept of “moods.” This is not an Orthodox concept; we do not have moods; we are afflicted by passions and we strive to acquire virtues. “Being in a bad mood” can never excuse your behavior in a monastery. This can be very hard for a novice to accept. Likewise, we do not have any “rights;” we have obligations and obediences, and we owe it to the Lord Himself to fulfill them, but no one owes us anything. Similarly, we cannot expect to be “happy” and “fulfilled;” we come to a monastery to weep for our sins. Today just about everything is “boring.” We’ve tried everything, we’re stubborn and very self-assured. To cure the boredom, some people decide to try monasticism. Young people especially want nothing more than to make an impression, cause a sensation. What could be more sensational than to suddenly have all your friends see you thirty pounds thinner, draped in black, clutching a prayer rope, expounding spiritual wisdom? Worst of all, in our times people are prouder

than ever before. We take pride in our imaginary virtues, we even take pride in our sins. And most of all, we are proud of our minds. We see ourselves as great thinkers, understanding psychologists, brilliant philosophers, who of course can understand all the finer, most profound monastic truths much more deeply than those who came before us. The notions of humility, obedience, self-condemnation, meekness and renunciation of one’s will used to “go without saying” for Orthodox Christians, but today they have to be learned. One of the Russian New Martyrs, Vladyka Varnava Beliaev, wrote that it takes thirty years for someone to start being a monk. That was said eighty years ago; today it probably takes forty or fifty!

So why bother? Is it really worth it? I remember Metropolitan Philaret, paraphrasing St. John of the Ladder, saying, “If everyone knew how hard it was in monasteries, no one would ever go. But if they knew the joys and rewards of monastic life, they would all come running. And it’s true, the rewards and the blessings really are there. One of the Optina Elders, St. Barsanuphius, taught, “True blessedness can only be acquired in a monastery. You can be saved in the world, but it is impossible to be completely purified... or to rise up and live like the angels and live a creative spiritual life in the world. All the ways of the world, laws destroy or at least slow down the development of the soul. And that’s why people can attain the angelic life only in monasteries... Monasticism is blessedness; the most blessed state that is possible for a person on this earth. There is nothing higher than this blessedness, because monasticism hands you the key to spiritual life.” In what do we find this blessedness? There is the knowledge that every day of your life and every minute of your day are sanctified and significant before God. Even your “bad” days and your really low days having meaning before Him. As long as you live the life consciously there is no wasted time. There is the solemnity and beauty of the divine services of our Church, which is truly the beginning of the life of Heaven still here on earth. In the world our attendance in church is always time stolen away from the world’s affairs, a welcome respite, a sort of spiritual treat. In the monastery the services determine the very patterns of life, and they are the real life; everything else is time

stolen away from them. They nourish us, instruct us, and in a certain sense even entertain us. When I was entering the monastery one of my greatest fears was that eventually I would find the services boring — the same thing, year in, year out, forever. Instead I find that they contain such vast wealth and so many levels, each more profound than the one before it, that a lifetime is nowhere near enough to begin to appreciate them. The saints have become my close friends and mentors; I experience the feasts differently each year; every Great Lent and every Pascha are a completely new revelation. Above all, in monasticism there is what St. Theophan the Recluse called “being sure that God keeps you as His own.” If you accept the ways of the Lord as your life, your conscience will soon be lit up with the knowledge that He, too, has accepted you as His own. I remember the night I spent in church after my tonsure, after making my monastic vows. I had such a vivid sense that the Lord was with me, it seemed that Heaven was literally just around the corner, that if I opened the door of the church it would be right there. This wasn’t a feeling; I knew this.

There is nothing more beautiful than the way monastics die. Most of our sisters die having received Holy Communion, surrounded by the community, with prayers and chanting and tears. Not the desperate tears of the world, but tears at parting with a friend and sister, even if just for a while. The funeral service of a monk, which is quite different from that of a lay person, is a lesson on the monastic life and the solidly grounded hope of eternal life that it represents rather than a meditation on death. For those who spend their life on the threshold of the Age to Come, death is merely stepping into the next room.

We do give up a lot in monastic life. My arms have ached after holding my friends’ children, knowing that I would never hold my own. But the Lord has given me many children of the spirit amongst the young novices with whom I work in the monastery. A monastic will never know the special intimacy and closeness that is the blessing of

an Orthodox marriage. And a married person will never know the spiritual kinship of a monastic community. There are no vacations from monasticism, no sick days, no time off. But every day is a feast.

“Monasticism,” one of the Optina Elders said, “supports the entire world. And when there will be no more monasticism the Dread Judgment will be upon us.”

And for those of us who are drawn to this way of life there simply is no other way to live. One writer described it like this: “Some people are very single-minded by nature. And there are ideas that permeate the lives of such people down to the very last detail. Everything beautiful, joyous and of consolation in this life is overshadowed for them by the memory of one thing, by a single thought: that of Christ Crucified. No matter how bright the sun might be, how beautiful nature, God’s creation is, how tempting faraway places might seem, they remember that Christ was crucified, and everything is dim in comparison. We might hear the most beautiful music, the most inspired speeches, but these souls hear one thing: Christ was Crucified, and what can ever drown out the sound of the nails being hammered into His flesh? Describe to them the happiness of a family life, of a beloved husband or wife, of children, but Christ was Crucified, and how can we not show the Lord that He isn’t alone, we haven’t deserted Him. There are those who are willing to forget everything in the world so as to stand by His Cross, suffer His suffering and wonder at His Sacrifice. For them the world is empty, and only Christ Crucified speaks to their hearts. And only they know what sweetness they taste still on this earth by sharing in the eternal mystery of the Cross, and only they hear what He says to them when they come to Him after a life full of incomprehensible hardships and inexplicable joy.”

Lesna Monastery, Provemont,
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St. Sabbas the Sanctified

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TROPARIA & PRAYERS FOR THE KATHISMATA OF THE PSALTER

INTRODUCTION TO THE READING OF THE PSALTER

One ought to chant the Psalter with understanding, thusly:

If one is a Priest, let him say:

Blessed is our God, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

But if one is not a Priest, the following should be said with compunction:

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

Then: O heavenly King..., Trisagion through Our Father..., and these troparia, in Tone VI—

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for at a loss for any answer, we sinners offer unto Thee this supplication as to our Master: Have mercy on us!

Glory...: O Lord, have mercy on us, for we have set our hope on Thee. Be not exceeding wroth with us, neither remember our iniquities; but overlook them now, in that Thou art compassionate, and deliver us from our enemies. For Thou art our God, and we are Thy people. We are all the work of Thy hands, and we call on Thy name.

Now & ever...: Open unto us the doors of thy loving-kindness, O Theotokos, that we who set our hope on thee may not perish, but through thee may be delivered from misfortunes. For thou art the salvation of the Christian race.

The reader then saith Lord, have mercy! (40 times), and maketh as many prostrations as he is able, where-upon he reciteth this Prayer to the Holy & Life-creating Trinity:

O most Holy Trinity, God and Creator of the universe: Haste Thou and direct my heart, that it

may begin with understanding, and end with good works, this divinely inspired book, which the Holy Spirit uttered through the mouth of David, and which I now desire to recite, unworthy though I am. Knowing well mine own ignorance, I fall down before Thee and pray, begging help of Thee: O Lord, set my mind aright, and make my heart steadfast, that I may not grow weary because of the words which my lips read, but that I may be gladdened with the understanding of what is read and may prepare myself for the doing of the good works which I learn; and I say: Let me be enlightened by good deeds, that at Thy judgment-seat I may, with all Thine elect, become a citizen of the land which is at Thy right hand. And now, O Master, bless me, that, sighing from [the depths of] my heart, I may chant with my tongue, saying thus:

O come, let us worship God our King!

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and God!

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and God!

Then stand a while, until all one's senses are calm, before beginning, not rapidly, nor yet at too slow a pace, but with compunction and a contrite heart, quietly, with understanding, not stridently, so that one may understand with one's mind what is being read.

AFTER THE FIRST KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone I—

I, the prodigal, am conceived in iniquities, and I dare not gaze upon the heights of heaven; but risking offense to Thy love for mankind, I cry: Cleanse me, O God, and save me!

If the righteous man is barely saved, where shall I, a sinner, find myself, for I have not borne the burden and heat of the day. Yet number me among the hired workers of the eleventh hour, and save me.

Glory...: Haste Thou to open unto me Thy fatherly arms, though I have wasted my life in prodigality. Disdain not now mine impoverished heart, O Savior, Who hast before Thine eyes the inexhaustible riches of Thy compassions. For unto Thee, O Lord, do I cry out in compunction: O Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee!

Now & ever...: O all-holy Virgin, hope of Christians, with the heavenly hosts unceasingly entreat God, to Whom thou gavest birth in manner past understanding and recounting, that He grant remission of sins and amendment of life unto all of us who with faith and love ever honor thee.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Almighty Master, Who art unapproachable, Origin of light, supernoetic Power, Father of the hypostatic Word, and Emitter of the Spirit, Who is One with Thee in power; Who in the mercy of Thy lovingkindness and Thine ineffable goodness hast not despised human nature, which is stuck fast in the darkness of sin, but hast illumined the world with the divine lights of Thy sacred teachings, the law and the prophets; Who in latter times wast well-pleased for Thine only-begotten Son to shine forth upon us in the flesh and guide us to the effulgence of Thy radiance: Let Thine ears be attentive unto the voice of our supplication. Grant, O God, that we may pass the whole night of this present life with a vigilant and watchful heart, awaiting the coming of Thy Son and our God, the Judge of all, that, not having lain down to sleep, but keeping vigil, we may find ourselves moved to do Thy commandments, and may enter together into His joy, where the sound is unceasing of those who keep festival, and the joy is unending of those who behold the indescribable beauty of Thy countenance. For Thou art the good God Who loveth mankind, and we send up glory to Thee — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit— now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE SECOND KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone II—

I am a barren tree, in nowise producing the fruit of repentance, O Lord; and I fear lest I be hewn down, and am terrified of that unquenchable fire which is to come. Wherefore, I entreat Thee: Before those tribulations, do Thou turn and save me!

Like the waves of the sea have mine iniquities risen up against me, and alone I founder, like a ship upon the deep, under the weight of many offenses; but steer me to the calm harbor of repentance, O God, and save me.

Glory...: “Have mercy on me,” said David; and I cry unto Thee: “I have sinned, O Savior! Cleanse me of my sins through repentance, and have mercy upon me!”

Now & ever...: O Theotokos, fervent intercession for Christians: Beseech Thy Son, that at thine entreaty He may deliver us from all the malice and cruelty of the foe, and in the compassions of His lovingkindness may grant us forgiveness of [the sins] we have committed, O Virgin Mother.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Almighty Master, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thine only-begotten Son: Grant me a body undefiled, a heart pure, a mind vigilant, an intellect not given to prodigality, and that the Holy Spirit may come upon me, unto the acquisition and sufficiency of truth in Thy Christ, to Whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, glory, honor and worship is due, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE THIRD KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone III—

Dwelling on earth, O my soul, repent, for dust doth not chant in the grave, nor is it delivered from transgressions. But cry out to Christ God: O Thou Who knowest the hearts of men, I have sinned against Thee! Before Thou judgest me, take pity and have mercy on me, O God.

Wherefore, O my soul, dost thou continue in offenses? Wherefore dost thou persist in delaying repentance? Remember the impending judgment, and cry out to Christ God: O sinless Lord Who knowest the hearts of men: I have sinned; have mercy on me!

Glory...: At the dread judgment I shall denounce myself, having no need of accusers, and shall condemn myself, having no need of witnesses; for the books of my conscience will be opened, and the things I have done in secret will be exposed. Wherefore, O God Who wilt examine my deeds at that universal trial, cleanse me and save me.

Now & ever...: Incomprehensible and unapproachable is the awesome mystery wrought in thee, O Mistress full of the grace of God; for, having conceived Him Who cannot be circumscribed, thou gavest birth unto Him, Who was clothed in flesh through thy pure blood. Entreat Him as thy Son, O pure one, that He save all who hymn thee.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Almighty Lord, Word of the all-unoriginate Father, O Jesus Christ Who art Thyself perfect God, Who for the sake of the lovingkindness of Thine intangible mercy dost in nowise separate Thyself from Thy servants, but ever abidest among them, O most holy King: Forsake not me, Thy servant, but grant me, unworthy though I am, the joy of Thy salvation, and illumine my mind with the light of the knowledge of Thy Gospel; enfold my soul in the love of Thy Cross, and adorn my body with Thy dispassion; calm my thoughts, keep my feet from tripping, and destroy me not with mine iniquities, O good Lord; but test me, O God, and prove my heart. Try me, and know my steps, and see if there be the path of unrighteousness within me, and turn me away therefrom, and guide

me to the everlasting way. For Thou art the way, the truth and the life, and unto Thee, and Thine unoriginate Father and Thine all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, do we send up glory, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE FOURTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone IV—

O Lord, visit Thou my lowly soul, which hath wasted its whole life in sins; accept me as Thou didst the harlot, and save me.

Navigating the deep of this present life, I ponder the abyss of my many evils; but lacking a helmsman for my thoughts, I utter unto Thee the cry of Peter: Save me, O Christ! Save me, O God, in that Thou lovest mankind!

Glory...: Together we shall soon enter the bridal-chamber of Christ, that we may all hear the divine voice of Christ our God. Come, O ye who love the glory of heaven, and having lighted our lamps with faith, with the wise virgins let us receive it.

Now & ever...: O my soul, repent before thy departure, for the judgment pronounced on sinners is impartial and inexorable; but cry out to the Lord in compunction of heart: I have sinned against Thee in knowledge and in ignorance, O Compassionate One! At the supplications of the Theotokos take pity on me, and save me!

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

To Thee, O Lord, Who alone art good and not mindful of the evils [I have committed], do I confess my sins: I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and am not worthy to lift up mine eyes to the heights of heaven because of the multitude of mine unrighteous deeds. But, O Lord, my Lord, Who alone art good and merciful, grant me tears of compunction, that therewith I may entreat Thee to cleanse me of every sin before the end; for fearsome and dreadful is the place whither I shall go when [my soul] is separated from the body, and a dark and inhuman horde of demons shall I encounter,

and I shall have no companion to help and deliver me. Wherefore, I fall down before Thy goodness [and cry]: Give me not over to those who will oppress me, neither let mine enemies boast over me, O good Lord, nor let them say: "Thou hast come into our hands and hast been given over to us!" Forget not Thy compassions, O Lord, neither reward me according to mine iniquities, nor yet turn Thy face away from me; but do Thou, O Lord, chasten me, though with mercy and compassion. And let not mine enemy rejoice over me, but put an end to his threats against me, set at naught all his activity, and grant me a clear path unto Thee, O good Lord; for though I have sinned, I have not had recourse to any other physician, nor have I stretched out my hands toward [any] strange god. Reject not, therefore, my supplication, but hearken unto me in Thy goodness, and establish my heart in the fear of Thee. And may Thy grace, O Lord, be upon me like fire, utterly consuming the impure thoughts within me. For Thou, O Lord, art Light transcending all other light, joy surpassing all joy, peace beyond all peace, and true life and salvation abiding unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE FIFTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone V—

Fearsome is Thy throne, and wicked is my life. Who then will deliver me from want, if Thou wilt not have mercy on me, O Christ God, in that Thou art compassionate and lovest mankind?

Glory...: Care for life hath driven me from paradise. What shall I do, wretch that I am? Wherefore, I knock at the gate and cry: O Lord, O Lord, open unto me at my repentance, and save me!

Now & ever...: What shall we call thy temple, O Theotokos? A spiritual haven or a paradise of heavenly delight, which is the means of everlasting life? As thou dost possess all good things, ever beseech Christ, that our souls be saved.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O God righteous and praised, O God great and mighty, O God Who art preëternal: Hearken unto the entreaty of a sinful man at this hour; hearken unto me, O Thou Who hast promised to hear those who call upon Thee in truth. Do not abominate me whose lips are unclean and who am stuck fast in sins, O Hope of all the ends of the earth and of those who wander afar off. Take Thou Thy sword and shield, and rise up to mine aid; unsheathe Thy sword, and hold at bay those who do me violence; fend off the unclean spirits from the face of my folly, and may there be put away from my mind the spirit of hatred and the remembrance of evils, the spirit of jealousy and falsehood, the spirit of fear and despondency, the spirit of pride and of every other evil: and may every burning and movement of my flesh resulting from the activity of the devil be extinguished, and may my soul, my body and spirit be illumined with the light of the divine knowledge of Thee: that by the multitude of Thy compassions I may attain unto the unity of the faith, a man perfect according to the measure of my stature, that with the angels and all Thy saints I may glorify the all-honored and majestic name of Thee — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit — now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE SIXTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone III—

Praise do I offer unto Thee, O Lord! And unto Thee, O God, do I declare all my transgressions: Having converted me, have mercy upon me!

Glory...: Save me, O my God, as once Thou didst save the publican! O my Savior, Who didst not disdain the tears of the harlot: Accept also my sighing, and save me!

Now & ever...: As a servant I now flee to thy protection, O all-immaculate one. Deliver me from the molten image of the passions, O Theotokos, in that thou gavest birth to the Author of dispassion.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

We thank Thee, O Lord our God, for all Thy benefactions which have been [showered] upon us, unworthy though we are, from [the time of] our infancy up to the present hour: those which we know and those of which we are ignorant, those manifest and those hidden, and those which have come to us by word or by deed. O Thou Who hast so loved us as to deign to give Thine only-begotten Son for us, vouchsafe that we also may be worthy of Thy love. By Thy word grant [us] wisdom, and by the fear of Thee breathe [into us] strength from Thy power. And if we have sinned voluntarily or involuntarily, forgive us and take no account [of our misdeeds]; and keep our souls holy, and set them before Thy throne pure in conscience, and having had an end worthy of Thy love for mankind. And be Thou mindful, O Lord, of all who call upon Thy name in truth. Remember all who wish us good or evil: for we are all men, and every man is vain. Wherefore, we pray to Thee, O Lord: Grant us the great mercy of Thy lovingkindness!

AFTER THE SEVENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone V—

When the Judge taketh His seat and the angels stand before Him, when the trumpet soundeth and the flame is kindled, what shalt thou do, O my soul, when thou art brought to trial? For then thine evils will confront thee, and thy secret sins will be exposed. Wherefore, before the end cry out to the Judge: Cleanse me, O God, and save me!

Glory...: Let us all keep vigil and greet Christ with much oil and many radiant lamps, that we may be vouchsafed to enter the bridal-chamber; for in vain will he who findeth himself outside the gates cry out to God: Have mercy on me!

Now & ever...: I lie upon the bed of mine offenses, bereft of my hope of salvation; for the dreaming of my slothfulness bringeth torment upon my soul. O God Who wast born of the Virgin, raise me up to Thy hymnody, that I may glorify Thee.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Lord my God, as Thou art good and lovest mankind, Thou hast wrought upon me many mercies, which I did not expect to see. What, then, shall I render unto Thy beneficence, O Lord, my Lord? I give thanks for Thy much-hymned name; I give thanks for Thine intangible long-suffering. Help me now, and aid me, O Master, and shelter me from all the sins I have ever committed in Thy sight. For Thou knowest the proclivity of my nature to stumble; Thou knowest my folly; Thou knowest those things which I have done knowingly and unknowingly, voluntarily and involuntarily, at night and in daytime, in mind and thought. Wherefore, as Thou art the good God Who loveth mankind, wash them away with the dew of Thy mercy, O all-good Lord, and save us for the sake of Thy holy name, by the judgments which Thou knowest. For Thou art Light and Truth and Life, and we send up glory unto Thee — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit — now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE EIGHTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone V—

The threefold waves of despair assail me, who have fallen headlong into the depths of sin; but as Thou art almighty, O Christ, Pilot of all, go Thou before me, and in Thy lovingkindness steer me to the calm harbor of dispassion, and save me at the supplications of the Forerunner, O Savior.

Glory...: O my soul, here things are transitory; but in the life to come they will be everlasting. I shall behold the tribunal and the Judge seated upon His throne, and shall tremble at the sentence. O my soul, henceforth turn [from thine evil ways], [for] thy trial is inevitable.

Now & ever...: O holy Mistress Theotokos, hope of the hopeless, help of the helpless and aid of those who place their trust in thee: Send down thine aid upon us!

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O compassionate and merciful Lord, Who art long-suffering and of great mercy: Attend to my prayer, and hearken unto the voice of my supplication. Work with me a sign unto good; guide me to Thy path, that I may walk in the truth; gladden Thou my heart, that I may fear Thy holy name. For great art Thou Who workest wonders! Thou alone art God, and there is none like unto Thee among gods, O Lord Who art mighty in mercy and goodly in strength, to help and comfort and save all who trust in the name of Thee—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE NINTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone VI—

I think upon the dread day, and I weep over my wicked deeds. How shall I answer the immortal King? With what boldness shall I, a prodigal, lift mine eyes to the Judge? O compassionate Father, only-begotten Son and Holy Spirit: Have mercy on me!

Glory...: In the vale of weeping, in the place which Thou hast appointed, rebuke me not, O Merciful One, when Thou shalt come to render just judgment, neither humiliate me before the angels; but take pity on me, O God, and have mercy on me.

Now & ever...: O good Theotokos, hope, protection and haven of those who trust in thee, and intercessor for the world: With the incorporeal ones earnestly entreat the loving God to Whom thou gavest birth, that our souls may be delivered from every threat, O only blessed one.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Master Lord our God, Who alone knowest the sickness of my wretched soul and the healing thereof: Cure it, as Thou knowest how to do, in the magnitude of Thy mercy and Thy compassion; for there is no salve, no ointment, no binding which may be applied thereto because of my deeds. But do

Thou Who camest to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance, have mercy and compassion, and forgive it; rend asunder the record of my many shameful deeds, and guide me to Thy straight path, that walking in Thy truth I may escape the darts of the evil one, and may thus stand uncondemned before Thy dread throne, glorifying and hymning Thine all-holy name forever. Amen.

AFTER THE TENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone VI—

I am in awe of the dread day of Thy coming, O Christ, I fear the implacable judgment, and I tremble, for I have committed a multitude of offenses. But converting me before the end, save me, in that Thou art a merciful God, at the supplications of Thine angels, O only Compassionate One Who lovest mankind.

Glory...: When the thrones are set for judgment, O Lord, and men stand before Thy tribunal, a king will find no more favor than a soldier, a master will not be preferred over a slave: for each will be either glorified or put to shame by his own deeds.

Now & ever...: Great gifts hast thou been vouchsafed, O pure Virgin Mother of God, for thou gavest birth in the flesh unto One of the Trinity—Christ the Bestower of life—unto the salvation of our souls.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Lord our God, Who art rich in mercy and hast no equal in respect to Thy compassions, Who alone art sinless by nature and for our sake becamest man, though without sin: Hearken at this hour unto this, my painful entreaty, for I am poor and bereft of good works, and my heart is troubled within me. For Thou knowest, O King most high, Lord of heaven and earth, that I have wasted all my youth in sins and, following after the lusts of my flesh, have become wholly an object of scorn to the demons. Continually have I followed wholly after the devil, wallowing in the mire of the

passions; for darkened in mind from my childhood, and even unto this present time, I have never desired to do Thy holy will; but, wholly in thrall to the passions which assail me, I am become an object of mockery and scorn to the demons, being in nowise mindful of the threat of Thine unendurable wrath against sinners and the fiery Gehenna which awaiteth [them]. As one fallen thus into despair and in nowise sensible of the need for conversion, I have emptied and stripped myself bare of Thy friendship. For what manner of sin have I not committed? What demonic work have I not done? In what shameful and prodigal activity have I not indulged with relish and enthusiasm? I have polluted my mind with carnal thoughts; I have sullied my body with intercourse; I have defiled my spirit by entertaining [lustful fantasies]; every member of my wretched flesh have I been keen to serve and to enslave to sins. And who will not henceforth lament me, wretch that I am? Who will not weep for me, the condemned? For I alone, O Master, have provoked Thy wrath; I alone have enkindled Thine anger against me; I alone have done that which is evil in Thy sight, surpassing and excelling all the sinners of ages past, having sinned without equal and beyond forgiveness. Yet because Thou art supremely merciful and compassionate, O Thou Who lovest mankind, and awaitest the conversion of man, lo! I cast myself down before Thy dread and implacable judgment-seat, and clasping, as it were, Thine all-pure feet, I cry out to Thee from the depths of my soul: Cleanse me, O Lord! Forgive me, O Thou Who art easily reconciled! Have mercy upon my weakness; be Thou inclined [to pity] mine ignorance; hearken unto my supplication, and receive not my tears with silence. Accept me who repent, and turn me back who am gone astray; embrace me who am returning, and forgive me who pray [to Thee]. For Thou hast not appointed repentance for the righteous, nor hast Thou appointed forgiveness for those who have not sinned; but it is for me, a sinner, that Thou hast appointed repentance for those things wherein I have caused Thee displeasure, and I stand before Thee, naked and stripped bare, O

Lord Who knowest the hearts of men, confessing my sins; for I am unable to lift up mine eyes and gaze upon the heights of heaven, being weighed down by the heavy burden of my sins. Enlighten, therefore, the eyes of my heart, and grant me compunction [which leadeth] to amendment [of life], that with goodly hope and true confidence I may proceed to the world beyond, continually praising and blessing the most holy name of Thee — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit — now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE ELEVENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone VII—

Possessed of the therapy of repentance, O my soul, draw nigh and fall down, and with sighing say: O Physician of souls and bodies, Who lovest mankind, free me from my many offenses, and number me with the harlot, the thief and the publican. Grant me forgiveness of mine iniquities, O God, and save me.

Glory...: I have not emulated the repentance of the publican nor acquired the tears of the harlot; for in my blindness I am at a loss how to make any such amendment. But in Thy lovingkindness, O Christ God, save me, in that Thou lovest mankind.

Now & ever...: O undefiled Virgin Theotokos, with the heavenly hosts entreat thy Son, that before the end we, who glorify thee with faith, may be granted forgiveness of transgressions.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

Shine forth the incorruptible light of Thy divine knowledge in our hearts, O Lord Who lovest mankind; and open Thou our noetic eyes. Instill within us an understanding of the precepts of Thy Gospel and the fear of Thy blessed commandments, that having trampled down all the lusts of the flesh, we may pass through the life of the spirit, being mindful of and doing all things which are well-pleasing unto Thee. For Thou art the enlightenment of our souls and bodies, O Christ God, and we send up glory unto Thee, and

Thine unoriginate Father, and Thine all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE TWELFTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone VII—

O Savior, Who didst accept the tears of the harlot and Peter, and justify the publican who sighed from the depths of his heart: Have pity on me who am in despair over my deeds, and save me!

Glory...: Receive me as [Thou didst] the publican, O Lord, and cleanse me as [Thou didst] the harlot, O Master; and have mercy on me as [Thou didst] the Canaanite woman, according to Thy great mercy.

Now & ever...: O blessed Theotokos, Mother of the Light: Entreat Christ God, that He shine forth the dawn and great mercy upon our hearts.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Lord my God, Who alone art good and lovest mankind, Who alone art merciful and meek, Who alone art true and just; O God Who alone art compassionate and merciful: Let Thy power come upon me, Thy sinful and unworthy servant, and let it fortify my temple through the glad tidings of Thy divine teaching, O Master Who lovest mankind, Who lovest the good, Who art [full] of lovingkindness. By Thy will enlighten mine inmost parts and all my members. Cleanse me of all evil and sin; preserve me undefiled and uncorrupted by any indwelling and activity of the devil; and grant me, in Thy goodness, to understand those things which are of Thee, to ponder them, to live in Thy desires, to be daunted by the fear of Thee, and to do what is pleasing unto Thee until my last breath, that according to Thine inexpressible mercy Thou mayest keep my soul and body, my mind and thoughts, as a temple immune to all the wiles of the adversary. O Lord my Lord, cover me with Thy compassion and forsake not me a sinner, Thine impure and unworthy servant, for Thou art

my Defender, O Lord. Of Thee ever is my song, and we send up glory unto Thee — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit — now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE THIRTEENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone VIII—

Look upon my lowliness with the eye of Thy compassion, O Lord, for my life will reach its end in but a little while, and there will be no salvation for me because of the things I have done. Wherefore, I pray: Look upon my lowliness with the eye of Thy compassion, O Lord, and save me!

Glory...: The Judge is coming! Have a care, O my soul, and consider the hour of that dread day; for He is without mercy for those who have shown no mercy. Wherefore, before the end cry out: Have pity on me, O Savior, Who alone art sinless!

Now & ever...: Bringing to mind the day and hour of Thy dread, terrible and implacable tribunal, O Master Christ, I tremble like a malefactor. Shameful are the deeds and grievous the acts which I alone have eagerly committed. Wherefore, I fall down before Thee with fear and cry out in pain: At the supplications of her who gave Thee birth, save me, O greatly Merciful One!

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O holy Lord, Who livest in the highest and lookest down upon all creation with Thine all-seeing eye: Before Thee have we inclined the neck of [our] soul and body, and unto Thee do we pray, O Holy One of the saints: Stretch forth Thine invisible hand from Thy holy dwelling-place, and bless us all; and if we have committed any sin in Thine eyes, voluntarily or involuntarily, forgive us, in that Thou art good and lovest mankind, O Thou Who grantest us the blessings of Thy peace. For Thine it is to have mercy and to save, O our God, and we send up glory unto Thee — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit — now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE FOURTEENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone VIII—

Like the harlot I fall down before Thee, that I may receive remission; and instead of myrrh I offer Thee tears from the depths of my heart, that Thou mayest take pity on me as Thou didst her, O Savior, and grant me cleansing of my sins: For like her I cry to Thee: Deliver me from the mire of my deeds!

Glory...: Wherefore art thou not mindful of death, O my soul? Why dost thou not undertake forthwith to amend [thy conduct] before the trumpets announce the judgment? Then will there not be time for repentance! Bring, then, to mind the publican and the harlot, who cried: "I have sinned against Thee, O Lord! Have mercy on me!"

Now & ever...: O Ever-virgin Theotokos, in that thou dost truly surpass the heavenly hosts by thy birthgiving, we who because of thee have been enriched with divinity unceasingly magnify thee.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

We thank Thee, O Lord God of our salvation, for Thou doest all things for the benefit of our life; for Thou didst grant us rest during the night-time which hath passed, and hast raised us up from our beds, and set us to worship Thine honored and glorious name. Wherefore, we pray Thee, O Lord: Grant us grace and power, that we may be accounted worthy to hymn Thee with understanding and to pray without ceasing, and to look continually unto Thee, the Savior and Benefactor of our souls, working out our salvation with fear and trembling. Hearken, therefore, and have mercy upon us, O Compassionate One; crush beneath our feet the invisible foe and enemy; accept the thanks which we offer up according to our strength; grant us the grace and power to open our mouths, and teach us Thy precepts. For we do not know that for which we ought to pray, unless Thou, O Lord, instruct us by Thy Holy Spirit. And if we have committed some sin before this present hour — by word, or deed, or thought, knowingly or

unknowingly — loose, remit and pardon it. For if Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee is cleansing, with Thee is deliverance. Thou alone art holy, the mighty Helper and Defender of our life, and Thee do we bless for all ages. Amen.

AFTER THE FIFTEENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone I—

The multitude of my transgressions are like the deep, O Savior, and I have grievously foundered through mine offenses. Give me [Thy] hand, as Thou didst to Peter. Save me, O God, and have mercy upon me!

Glory...: In that I have been condemned by [my] wicked thoughts and deeds, O Savior and God, grant me the intention to convert, that I may cry: Save me, O good Benefactor, and have mercy on me!

Now & ever...: O divinely blessed and all-immaculate Maiden, cleanse me, wretch that I am, who have defiled myself with wicked deeds and vile thoughts, O undefiled, pure and most holy Virgin Mother.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Lord and Master Jesus Christ, Thou art my helper! I am in Thy hands: Come Thou to mine aid! Leave me not to sin against Thee, for I am lost; and let me not follow the will of my flesh. Disdain me not, O Lord, for I am sick. Thou knowest what is profitable for me. Leave me not to perish through my sins; forsake me not, O Lord, depart not from me, for unto Thee have I fled. Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God; heal Thou my soul, for I have sinned against Thee; save me in Thy mercy, for those who afflict me are before Thee, and I have none other refuge than Thee, O Lord. Wherefore, let all who rise up against me, and seek after my soul to destroy it, be put to shame, for Thou alone art mighty, O Lord, and Thine is the glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE SIXTEENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone I—

The other world awaiteth thee, O my soul, and the Judge will expose thy secret and wicked deeds. Remain no longer in thy present ways, but hasten to the Judge ahead of time, crying out: O God, cleanse me and save me!

Glory...: In that I am the object of many offenses and countless wounds, O Christ [my] Savior, though I still sin I beseech Thy compassion: O Physician of the infirm, visit, heal and save me!

Now & ever...: O my soul, wherefore livest thou in negligence and slothfulness? Why hast thou no care for the evil things thou hast done in this life? See that thou settest all aright, lest the Lord close the door to thee. Make haste to the Theotokos, fall down and cry out: O all-pure Mistress, hope of the hopeless, save me who have transgressed greatly against thee!

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O holy Lord, Who dwellest in the highest and lookest upon all creation with Thine all-seeing eye: Before Thee do we bend the neck of our soul and body, and to Thee do we pray, O Holy One of the saints: Stretch forth Thine invisible hand from Thy dwelling place, and bless us all; and forgive us our every offense, voluntary or involuntary, by word or deed. Grant us compunction, O Lord; grant us spiritual tears from [the depths of our] souls, unto the cleansing of our many sins; bestow Thy great mercy upon Thy world and upon us, Thine unworthy servants. For blessed and all-glorious is the name of Thee — the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit — now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE SEVENTEENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone II—

Like the prodigal son have I sinned against Thee, O Savior. Accept me who repent, O Father, and have mercy on me, O God!

Glory...: With the publican's voice do I cry unto Thee, O Savior Christ. Cleanse me as Thou didst him, and have mercy upon me, O God!

Now & ever...: O Theotokos, disdain me not who am in need of thy help; for in thee hath my soul trusted. Have mercy upon me!

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Almighty Master and Lord, Creator of all, Father of compassions and God of mercy, Who didst fashion man from the earth and show him [to be created] according to Thine image and likeness, that by him Thy majestic name may be glorified on earth; and Who, when he fell by breaking Thy commandment, didst fashion him anew and yet better in Thy Christ, and didst lead him up to the heavens: I thank Thee that Thou hast magnified Thy greatness in me, that Thou hast not given me over utterly to mine enemies, who seek to cast me down into the abyss of hell, and that Thou hast not left me to perish in mine iniquities. Now, therefore, O greatly merciful Lord, Who lovest what is good, Who desirest not the death of the sinner, but awaitest his conversion and acceptest [it], Who settest aright those who have been cast down, and mendest the broken: Turn even me unto repentance, set me aright who have been cast down, and mend me who am broken. Be Thou mindful of Thy compassions and Thine incomparable goodness which hath been upon us from of old, and forget the countless iniquities which I have committed in thought, word and deed. Loose the blindness of my heart, and grant me tears of compunction for the washing away of my vile thoughts. Harken, O Lord, and attend, O Thou Who lovest mankind; cleanse me of the passions which have dominion over me. And let sin have no more hold over me, nor let the warring demon prevail against me, neither let [him] bend me to his own will; but with Thy mighty hand, O Thou Who hast rescued me from his domination, do Thou reign within me, O good Lord Who lovest mankind; and be Thou well-pleased that I be wholly Thine, and that I live henceforth according to Thy will. And in Thine ineffable goodness grant me cleansing of heart, a

guard over my mouth, uprightness in mine actions, humble-mindedness, peace in my thoughts, serenity of the powers of my soul, spiritual joy, true love, long-suffering, goodness, meekness, faith unfeigned, steadfast temperance; and make me replete with every good fruit through the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. And take me not away in the midst of my days, neither snatch away mine unrepentant and unprepared soul, but perfect me with Thy perfection, and thus lead me up from this present life, that, having eluded the principalities and powers of darkness unhindered, I also, through Thy grace, may behold the ineffable beauty of Thine unapproachable glory, with all the saints in whom the most honorable and majestic name of Thee — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit — hath been glorified and hallowed, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AFTER THE EIGHTEENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone II—

Before Thou condemnest me, O Lord, my Lord, grant me conversion and correction of my many sins; and impart unto me compunction of spirit, that I may cry out to Thee: O my compassionate God Who lovest mankind, save me!

Glory...: Making myself like unto the irrational beasts, prodigal that I am, I have joined myself to them. Grant me conversion, O Christ, that I may receive from Thee great mercy.

Now & ever...: Turn not Thy face away from me who pray to thee, O Mistress; but, as the compassionate Mother of the compassionate God, make haste to grant me conversion before the end, that, saved by thee, I may hymn thee as my salvation and hope unashamed, O my Lady.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Lord, reprove me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy wrath. O Master Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me who am sinful, poor, naked, slothful, perverse, accursed, a fornicator, an adulterer, an abuser of self and of other men, vile, lustful, ungrateful,

unmerciful, cruel, a drunkard, consumed by a burning conscience, indifferent, cowardly, craven, unworthy of Thy love for mankind, and deserving of every torment, Gehenna and torture. Subject me not to a multitude of such torments because of the multitude of my great offenses, O Deliverer, but have mercy on me, for I am sick in soul, flesh, mind and thought; and by the judgments which Thou knowest save me, Thine unworthy servant, at the supplications of our all-pure Mistress, the Theotokos, and of all the saints who have pleased Thee well throughout the ages: for blessed art Thou forever. Amen.

AFTER THE NINETEENTH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone VII—

In thanksgiving I glorify Thee, O my Savior and God, for Thou hast provided repentance for all sinners. When Thou shalt come to judge the whole world, put me not to shame who have committed shameful deeds.

Glory...: Having transgressed against Thee without measure, I expect infinite torments. O my God, have pity on me, and save me!

Now & ever...: I flee now to the magnitude of Thy mercy, O Theotokos. Break asunder the chains of my sins.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Master, Christ God, Who hast healed my passions by Thy Passion and hast cured my wounds with Thy wounds: Grant tears of compunction unto me who have sinned greatly against Thee. Distill for my body somewhat of the perfume of Thy life-creating Body, and sweeten my soul with Thy precious Blood against the bitterness which mine adversary hath given me to drink. Lift up to Thee my mind which hath been dragged downwards, and draw it up from the abyss of perdition; for I have no repentance, I have no compunction, I have no comforting tears which raise children up to their inheritance. I have been darkened in mind amid the passions of life, and am unable to lift up mine eyes to Thee in my pain. I cannot warm

myself with tears of love for Thee. Yet, O Lord and Master Jesus Christ, Treasury of good things, grant me complete repentance and a heart diligent in searching for Thee. Grant me Thy grace, and renew in me the lineaments of Thine image. I have forsaken Thee; do not forsake me. Come Thou in search of me, lead me up to Thy pasturage, and number me among the sheep of Thy chosen flock. Nurture me with them on the verdure of Thy divine Mysteries, through the supplications of Thine all-pure Mother and of all Thy saints. Amen.

AFTER THE TWENTIETH KATHISMA

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone VIII—

O my Christ, Fullness of all good things: Fill Thou my soul with joy and gladness, and save me, in that Thou alone art greatly merciful.

Glory...: Though I have sinned in Thy sight, O Christ my Savior, yet have I known none other God than Thee. And I make bold [to appeal] to Thy lovingkindness: O compassionate Father, only-begotten Son, and Holy Spirit, accept me who turn to Thee like the prodigal son, and save me!

Now & ever...: I know none other refuge and fervent intercession save thee, O Mistress. As thou hast boldness before Him Who was born of thee, help me and save me, thy servant!

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and this Prayer—

O Lord Jesus Christ my God, have mercy upon me, a sinner, Thine unworthy servant, as often as I have sinned as a man all throughout the time of my life, even to this very day. Forgive me my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, in mind and thought, by captivation and inattention, and by great slothfulness and indifference. And if I have sworn by Thy name, if I have vowed falsely, or blasphemed in thought; or if I have offended, or slandered, or grieved, or angered anyone in any way, or have stolen, or gratified my lust, or lied, or have eaten secretly; or if a friend came to me and I rejected him; or if I have offended or embittered my brother; or if when standing in prayer and psalmody my wicked mind hath dallied

among evil thoughts; or if I have indulged in pleasures more than is seemly, or laughed mindlessly, or spoken blasphemously; or if I have been vainglorious, or prideful, or have set my gaze upon vain beauty and been seduced thereby; or if I have given my mind over to things which are harmful to me; or if I have in any way been negligent concerning prayer, or have not kept the commandments of my spiritual father, or have spoken idly, or done ought else which is evil — for all these things and more have I done, and things which I cannot even recall — have mercy, O Lord, and forgive me all, that I may fall asleep and rest in peace, hymning, blessing and glorifying Thee, and Thine unoriginate Father, and Thine all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

AND AFTER COMPLETING SEVERAL KATHISMATA,
OR THE WHOLE PSALTER & THE ODES

“It is truly meet to bless thee...” or “In thee doth all creation rejoice...”

Trisagion through Our Father..., and these Troparia, in Tone VI—

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for at a loss for any answer, we sinners offer unto Thee this supplication as to our Master: Have mercy on us!

Glory...: The Church hath shown the honored celebration of Thy Prophet {David} to be heaven, O Lord, [wherein] the angels join chorus with men. At his supplications arrange our life in peace, O Christ God, that we may chant unto Thee: Alleluia!

Now & ever...: Great are the multitudes of my transgressions, O Theotokos. Unto thee have I fled in need of salvation, O pure one. Visit mine ailing soul, and entreat thy Son and our God, that He grant me remission of the evils I have done, O thou who alone art blessed.

Then, Lord, have mercy! forty times, and as many prostrations as one is capable of doing, repeating the prayer [of Saint Ephraim the Syrian], “O Lord and Master of my life...” the while. Then this Prayer is recited with compunction—

O greatly merciful and all-merciful Lord, Bestower of every good gift, Who lovest mankind, King of the whole universe, Whose names are many, O Master and Lord: Poor and needy am I, yet do I dare to call upon Thy wondrous, awesome and holy name, before which the whole creation of the heavenly hosts trembleth with fear. Here below, on earth, Thou didst make wondrous the dispensation of Thine ineffable love for mankind by sending Thy beloved Son, Whom Thou didst beget in inseparable Divinity from the unoriginate bosom of Thy paternal glory, that He might join angels and men into a single union. Be Thou mindful, O Lord, of my low state of despondency. Though I am dust and mire, I call upon Thee, the ineffable Light, clothed in the weakness of the flesh which Thy word bore, and wherein He freed our souls from slavery to the enemy by His death, that He might vouchsafe that all who with faith take up the yoke of service to Thee may come to share in Thy glory, from which lying Satan fell away. Have mercy on me, who have been darkened by sinful thoughts; raise up my mind, which hath been choked by the thorns of slothfulness and the ice of intransigence; make my heart steadfast, that I may burn for Thee; send a fountain of tears into mine eyes; and at the end, make the departure of the soul

of me, Thy servant, to be blameless, guiding me to struggle diligently toward Thee. In Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, remember my parents and all those close to me — my brethren, [sisters,] friends and neighbors, and all Orthodox Christians; and by the supplications of all the saints save me. Accept as a favor these psalms and prayers which I recite in Thy presence for myself; and let not this entreaty and sighing be hateful to Thee — the Father, and Thine only-begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit — now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then, More honorable than the cherubim...; Glory..., Now & ever...; Lord, have mercy!, thrice. Bless, O Lord!

If he who readeth is a Priest, he reciteth the sacerdotal ending; but if the reader be a layman, he endeth thus:

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, for the sake of the supplications of Thine all-pure Mother, through the power of the precious and life-creating Cross, of the holy incorporeal hosts of heaven, of our venerable and God-bearing fathers, of the holy Prophet David, and of all the saints, have mercy and save me, a sinner, in that Thou art good and lovest mankind.

Translated from the Church Slavonic by the reader Isaac E, Lambertsen, from **The Psalter** (Jordanville, NY: St. Job of Pochaev Press, 1959). Translation copyright © 1982; revised and amplified 2000 and 2002. All rights reserved.

(continued from page 6)

Deacon John, who works at the airport for Delta. He passed us on to Deacon Zachary, who took us home to rest for a while with Rachel Marie, Fr. Gregory's daughter, awaiting some convenient time to be carried on to Tennessee.

The convenient time didn't come, and only a few bags of roasted coffee remained ready for shipment. Further extraordinary measures were called for: Rachel Marie packed us up in a nice box, carried us down to the local UPS store, and shipped us directly to the micro-roastery in Nashville.

Immediately, we were roasted, just in time, as the last remaining bags were shipped out. But now... here we are again. Only a few bags of us remain in the bottom of the special freezer where we're kept until we are shipped. How will we be replaced? It's quite uncertain, even though Fr. Gregory is expected to return to Haiti early in Lent, as it's doubtful it will be possible for him to drive, as he usually does, to visit Tombe Gateau. But he'll probably find a way...

A VISIT TO HAITI—JANUARY 2006

BY CARA MARGARET BLIVEN

“...Rich and poor are not in the world by chance but by God’s most wise providence. God would be able, in the twinkling of an eye, to make all men equal in wealth, but that would be sheer folly. In that case, men would become totally independent of one another. Who would then be saved? For men are saved through their dependence on one another. The rich depend on the poor, and the poor on the rich; the healthy depend on the sick, and the sick on the healthy...” *

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich goes on to say “All is interwoven like a many-hued carpet. A world of a single hue would blind all eyes. How would a rich man save his soul by charity and humility, or lose it by hardness and pride, were there no poor? How would a poor man save his soul by patience and endurance, or lose it by grumbling, theft and rapine, were there no rich? How would the learned save his soul by compassion for the ignorant and by labors on their behalf, or lose it by his haughty scorning of the ignorant, if there were no ignorant in the world? How would the ignorant save his soul by obedience and meekness towards the learned, or lose it by disobedience, envy and savagery towards the learned, were there no learned? How would the healthy save their souls by good-hearted care for the sick, compassion and prayer for the sick, or lose it by turning in loathing from the sick, indifference towards the sick and boasting of their own health, were there no sick? Or how could a sick man save his soul by submission and gratitude to the healthy, or lose it by hatred and envy for the healthy, if there were no healthy?” **

Travel to Haiti thrusts one into a rich bath of colors, sights, sounds, and human differences. So much is different from our ordinary lives in America that every encounter, every new impression opens for us a window to our soul and challenges us in unexpected ways.

Stepping out of the plane in Port-au-Prince is the first step into another world. The air is balmy; a band plays by the entrance to the airport. The disembarking passengers press into the airport and through immigration to the baggage claim area. There porters mill around, anxious to help and struggling with huge bags bulging with supplies for a country dependent in so many ways on the charity of foreigners and on the support of their own who are able to live and work abroad. Then, stepping out of the airport, you are in the midst of a busy city with crowds of people, vendors of all kinds, noisy buses and cars, trucks carrying UN soldiers, junk yard vehicles rusted out, patched together and still running; air conditioned cars carrying well dressed people.

The poor are never out of sight and beggars abound. A listless woman sits on the side of the road with a child in her arms and a hand out-stretched for alms. A gaunt man pushes a wheelbarrow piled high with a load of charcoal and weaves his way past cars and through the crowds on the street. A young boy washes your car while you are in a shop or cleans your windshield while you are at a stop light and then asks to be paid. Strangers passing in the street call out “Blanc, give me dollar.” Children come up to stare and, if they are greeted with a kind word they understand, will come closer and touch and ask questions.

Not far from the airport, on a rocky path barely wide enough for a car, a sky blue three story building dedicated to the Theotokos can be seen rising above the labyrinth of rubble that is the neighborhood of Village de l’Amitié (Friendship Village) This is the elementary school built and directed by Fr. Jean where the morning starts with prayer and ends with vespers. Further out, in the volatile area of Fontamara, far towards the south-western edge of the city, is the home of Fr. Grégoire and Matushka

*Homily on the 12th Sunday after Pentecost, the Gospel on the Burden of Riches [Homilies, Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, vol. II, p.124; Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1998).

** *ibid.*

Rose May. It is quiet haven with a chapel and the cluster of classrooms that make up their school, Foyer d'Amour (Hearth of Love) for emotionally disturbed children who have been scarred by the violence and poverty into which they were born.

The road leading out of Port-au-Prince goes past streetside shops and places where people bathe and wash their clothes, past roadblocks and police security, past high walls enclosing large well maintained homes or hotels, past sewage filled ditches and trees and shrubs covered with colorful blossoms. Horns honk, drivers shout at each other, people call out greetings, radios blare out news and talk shows and ads and dance music. There are glimpses of the sea, of the mountains and of a goat or ox chewing unhurriedly in a grassy corner.

Continuing on beyond the plains area where the air is sweet with the odors of processing sugar cane, the road turns and crosses the mountains to the Caribbean coast. There, in a community outside the old town of Jacmel, is the quiet oasis of the Hotel Cyvadier. Leaving the dusty main road one finds the hotel and restaurant under a canopy of tall old trees with green lawns, sweet smelling plants and a splendid cliffside view of the sea. People from the surrounding area care for the grounds and serve the guests who come for a bit of respite from their work in other parts of the island. In the hotel parking lot can be seen cars from Doctors Without Borders, an international children's agency, the UN election monitoring commission, a local protestant missionary group, and a large busload of Haitian educators there for a two day staff development conference.

A stone stairway leads down to the beach, which is maintained by the hotel but used by the townspeople as well. Vendors spread their wares on mounds of sand, speak poetically about the beauty and value of their products, and enjoy the friendly banter of haggling over a price. The cove is protected from the rough waves of the sea and is a clear jewel-like blue. Some days small one or two man fishing boats can be seen rowing back and forth casting their nets. Their catch, together with a rich variety of fresh fruits and vegetables that are brought down from the mountains in huge bundles balanced on women's heads, provide for three meals a day for the hotel guests.

Outside the wall of the hotel, between the main road and the shore is a maze of narrow roads and paths where the people of Cyvadier live. In these neighborhoods there is no need for a phone directory or Mapquest. Ask for someone and before long he will show up, or a neighbor will lead you to his house. Women cook over outdoor fires and clean the family's pots and pans at an open spigot; houses are filled to overflowing with children and members of the extended family, and in the dry season the grounds are dusty and littered with trash. Here many people only eat once a day. Soft drinks and candies that dull the appetite momentarily are readily available, but they sap a child's health. Fasting is a way of life, even if not a chosen one. People are wiry and resilient, looking older than their age, rarely fat. A woman who is anemic cannot afford an iron supplement. A woman who has been sick for months and cannot afford to go to a clinic is rubbed with a sweet smelling oil by a woman in her church. Foreign visitors to this area carry a veritable pharmacy of pills "just in case". The hotel's water is clean and foods safe, but children outside are unwittingly exposed to parasites and diseases in the water they drink and in which they bathe.

From the road and from these homes it is not always possible to see the sea, but in the other direction, the mountains rising to the sky cannot be missed. The rocky paths are traversed by many callused bare feet, by those who wear plastic slippers or used shoes that were first used and discarded in America, and occasionally by a foreigner with sturdy, well fitting shoes. Travelers are never alone and are greeted by and greet everyone. Good morning, how are you managing? How are your people? Words of encouragement are given to men digging a plot of land; a child alone in a yard is offered prayers for his parents. The owners of a neat, colorfully painted house find chairs to place in their cleanly swept yard for the visitors who stop to rest from their climb.

The higher one gets, the more breezy and cool the air is. The sky is clear and kites float high in the sky, bobbing over the mountains that extend to the sea and swooping above the noise of an angry shouting man in an unhappy home. Holding the strings are children whose minds soar beyond their grumbling stomachs and their shoeless feet as they follow the dancing of the kites.

From this height the village of Cyvadier looks tiny, quiet and peaceful — less dirty and dusty than from below. A few large mansions and hotels, hidden from the road, are in clear sight. The coast stretches to the east and to the west, and the sea extends beyond the horizon. Keen eyes can make out the new church building being built by the Orthodox faithful. It will hold all the faithful plus visitors for a Sunday service and will be well apart from the every-day noises that encircle the tiny building now in use. Farsighted eyes can envision the large golden domes of a church that might, one day, be built on the other side of the church's property — a beacon that could be seen not only from the main road but also from miles away in the mountains beyond where so many live in ignorance and without hope, as well as far out to sea.

In the little Orthodox chapels in several places in Haiti and in the Orthodox Church of the Holy Nativity of the Theotokos in Port-au-Prince, services are performed with respect and dignity. On Sunday women and men and children come in their best clothes and shoes. An altar boy brings out a basket of scarves for the women and girls who do not own anything to put on their heads. Men and women cross themselves and venerate the icons. A young girl who goes to school fills out prosphora lists for others in church who cannot write. Children go to confession and ask the priest for a blessing. These faithful partake of the Holy Mys-

teries and in doing so are linked to the saints of all ages and to the rest of the Church.

When a journey to Haiti comes to an end, one joins a long line of people at the airport to go through ticketing and security points and eventually onto the airplane. A well dressed Haitian orthopedist returns to his practice in New York after a ten-day trip to his home town which he makes every six weeks. A young woman with skin tight jeans, a cropped top and tattoos takes two children back to Miami. An older woman sitting by a window holding her one small bag has no clue what the French- and English-speaking stewardess is saying when she tells everyone to buckle up — she speaks only Créole. Two college students on their way to the US to study tentatively taste the packets of strawberry flavored cranberries offered with the in-flight snack.

In less than two hours the plane lands in Miami and the passengers embark into a covered walkway that leads into the orderly airport waiting area. The moving steps of escalators take you upstairs; picture signs direct you to a restroom where there is a whole row of sinks where the water appears without your having to carry it from the well or river or even having to turn on a spigot. An ATM machine gives you cash to buy a meal and money to pay your parking lot fee before you drive home. You've returned to the world you left, without the material things you took with you to Haiti, but now laden with the unexpected spiritual gifts you were given in a place that is rich in God's blessings.

Bishop Nikolai enjoins us to accept that "inequality is placed in the very foundation of the created world. We must rejoice at this inequality, and not rebel against it, for it is placed there by Love, not by hatred, by Understanding, not by folly. Human life is not made ugly by the absence of equality, but by the absence of love and understanding in men. Let us have more divine love and spiritual understanding of life, and we shall see that twice as much inequality would in no way lessen the blessedness given to men." *



SOON TO BE THE SANCTUARY
ST. AUGUSTINE'S CYVADIER, JACMEL, HAITI

* *ibid*, p. 170. The 16th Sunday after Pentecost, the Gospel on the Talents.